

The Boston Globe

**Metro**

# Chicago tycoon to join hunt for casino in Mass.

## Will file without specifying locale

By **Mark Arsenault** | GLOBE STAFF    JANUARY 15, 2013

Chicago casino and real estate tycoon Neil Bluhm will submit a last-minute application Tuesday to the state gambling commission, seeking development rights for a resort casino or a slot machine parlor, on an unidentified site in Greater Boston, said a spokesman for Bluhm.

Bluhm, chairman of Rush Street Gaming, is “pursuing several very good sites” in the Greater Boston region, but has not yet decided on one, Greg Carlin, chief executive of Rush Street, said in an interview Monday night.

The state-imposed deadline is 5 p.m. Tuesday for casino developers to submit applications and a nonrefundable \$400,000 fee.

Developers do not need to identify a site on their initial applications. Bluhm will have at least several more months to secure land for the development before the gambling commission requires specific descriptions of each project and where they will be built.

“The Boston region is a robust gaming market that is currently underserved,” Carlin said. “We are excited by the opportunity to develop an exciting entertainment destination in a new gaming market.”

The state’s 2011 gambling law authorizes up to three resort casinos, each costing at least \$500 million, with no more than one resort in each of three regions of the state. The law also creates a license for one slot machine parlor, which may be built in any region.

If Bluhm decides to seek a resort casino license, he would compete with Suffolk Downs in East Boston, and Las Vegas casino designer Steve Wynn.

On Monday, Wynn formally entered the competition for the Greater Boston casino resort license, submitting an application and the \$400,000 fee to the gambling commission. Wynn wants to build on vacant industrial land on the Mystic River in Everett.

Suffolk Downs, which has proposed a gambling resort at the racetrack with Caesars Entertainment, paid its fee in August and completed its application Monday afternoon by submitting the required paperwork and financial disclosures.

Plainridge Racecourse, in Plainville, is the only applicant for the slots license, for which Bluhm may compete. George Carney, owner of Raynham Park, has also said he will apply.

Wynn proposed a casino in Foxborough a year ago, but dropped the project last spring due to fierce local opposition. He has found the political atmosphere friendlier in Everett, where Mayor Carlo DeMaria is committed to negotiating with Wynn and bringing the issue to a citywide referendum. No casino can win a license unless the project is endorsed by the voters of the host community.

Suffolk Downs is casting itself as the hometown team, issuing a statement Monday night highlighting the local people involved, including Joe O'Donnell, a prominent Boston businessman who holds a stake in the track; Chip Tuttle, Suffolk Downs' chief operating officer, who is from Salem; and Gary Loveman, chief executive of Caesars and a former Harvard business professor.

Four prominent companies are pursuing the Western Massachusetts resort casino license: MGM Resorts and Penn National Gaming, each of which proposes a gambling resort in downtown Springfield; Mohegan Sun, proposing a casino in Palmer; and Hard Rock International, with plans for a resort at the Eastern States Exposition fairgrounds in West Springfield. All have submitted their full applications and fee, according to the commission.

Commercial casino development is on hold in Southeastern Massachusetts to allow the Mashpee Wampanoag time to make progress on winning federal approval for a tribal casino in Taunton.

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